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NORTH SHORE

by
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AN OLD Chinaman, spading around flower-beds, sang a tune aimless and wandering as the history of his young Republic; languorous twilight was settling over the Rancho San Hernandez, an early twilight, brought gently in by a high fog. The smallest girl in Jalisco breeches and a strawberry-colored sweater had the air of nothing much to do as she rambled down a crooked path. Her eyes were dark, but not the languorous sort; perhaps that was because her eyelids peeked slightly upward, suggesting question marks.

This was Shelby Barrett, unguarded, even smiling as she went toward a destiny which was to take her far afield. Her Californian days were to be brief, but charged with the chemistry which makes a future.

The Rancho, only a euphemistic name for a colony of rented horses, vaguely showed its prosperous roots

among the foliage up and down the hills. Above Shelby loomed the exalted tales of Eugene Fairchild's pretentious villa; just below her, equally pretentious, the wide-spread "cottages" of that Mrs. Nicholas, who commanded her friends to call her Nicko, invited to a warm bath and a vigorous rubdown at the hands of Nicko's maid.

Pleasantly tired with an afternoon in the saddle, lazily forgetting this morning's irritation, Shelby let her mind slide with unimportant thoughts. Perhaps she was thinking of tonight's dance. It would be fun to fluff around in the green evening gown she had bought, in a burst of extravagance, when they had stopped over at Los Angeles. She wanted to get away from hersey clothes, make her silver slipers do all sorts of steps to the silken saxophone music.

Plunkety-plunk-pon-plunk. The patter of trotting on shagreen. Rusty's wish-fulfillment had com-

posed the words in her head. A slow, nasal voice was singing in the accents which a Yankee uses when he tries to talk like a Southerner. Then the sound died, leaving a stillness where the materialistic mind reverts to phantoms. But the match of song had come from one of the bedrooms doors opening on the patio.

The young girl sniffed defiance. Was the princely Wyatt given to music? Was he loitering now in the prize guest-room, which she had surrendered to His Highness, regarding himself with sentiment? Or perhaps he had employed a hired harper, after the fashion of the Pharaohs, to crouch by his bed, soothing him to sleep. Shelby paused, inventing sarcasms to heap on the head of this pampered Easterner to whom she had given place by royal command. *

Then she reached the door of the little room which Nicko had allotted her this morning, and opened it rather too hastily. The lights were

full on, squaring the picture. A tall young man sat on one of those boudoir benches which ladies occupy when they do their hair. But he wasn't doing his hair. Unconscious as Eden, he sat there in his B. V. D's.

Shelby started to back away, but her heel struck something. It was like one single movement, the way he turned, saw her, reached for a quilt, wrapped himself in an improvised toga. The banjo changed to the floor.

"I beg your pardon." He had a hawk-like nose, handsome brown, and the mouth of a comedian. In that embarrassed second Shelby almost thought that he had contrived that costume to surprise and nauseate her.

"I beg yours," she said, and wondered if she tittered.

But as she went down the corridor the Barrett temper put up its back, made her want to find Mrs. Nicholas and ask impertinent questions. This was the limit. To be

routed out of one room in the morning and another in the afternoon. I'll pack my trunks right now and go to the hotel, Shelby was storming, when she saw the outflung Harbarn's long face thrust out of a door.

"What the devil is that man doing in my room?"

"Oh, that ain't your room, Miss Barrett."

"Not my room? Well, where do I live? Anywhere?"

"You're right in the name room you always was, Miss Barrett. We didn't have to move your things at all."

Barbara swung upon a door; Shelby's baggage was in place, her silver toilet things on the bureau. The maid fluttered around, drawing the bath, laying rubber sheets across the chain-longous for the evening rub-down. And as she worked she talked, nothing, exorcising her capacity as Nicko's unofficial social adjuster.

"I'm sorry I didn't catch you in

H. BOUGHARD

At least of the little figure crouching under the tree, their faces changed. In the sunlight they must have been the faces of a noble pair, but Wynatt Bureau said:

"Oh! Are you taking care of Mrs. Wynatt?"

"Indeed I am," said Shelby, cool as the air of her quarter geld.

"Oh, Shelby!" giggled Estelle, then, with a gasp, she, the goddess of the mistletoe.

"I beg your pardon," whinned Wynatt Bureau, "I am not your cousin, Mrs. Wynatt, of course."

"What? You're not? In your flannel clothes, Shelby dropped a glove, shook hands, wondered what they were for, and then she turned to see that they had neither wanted nor needed to see her."

"I'm not going by," explained Estelle, "and we dropped in to see her."

"Shelby thought."

"It usually is the stable at twelve o'clock and Shelby," Brianne began, a little extra gown over in the afternoon. She was about to apologize for her costume, but thought better of it; her tone was too cordial.

"Yes, one of Tex Major's cousins."

"Yes, he is," briefly. Ashley felt that she was under five minutes to make the time of her appearance. And it was Brianne who said, "You're not?"

"It's a Kentucky horse, isn't he?" Estelle asked, and Shelby was silent.

"Yes, Tex Major was one of our stables."

"Then Brianne comes from your stables?"

"It's so lovely, and we've all been perfectly able to have you bring your horse, Shelby."

"I'm not going to buy such a holding," I think you have a very extravagant taste to buy such a horse."

"We didn't buy," said Shelby, and she and the other two knew she shouldn't have said that, decided Mrs. Wynatt was a present."

Mrs. Wynatt and Wynatt Bureau looked at each other.

"He's sixteen hands high," estimated Mrs. Wynatt.

"Yes, your life," declared Wynatt Bureau, "he's sixteen-two, it is."

He was right, but Shelby did nothing to encourage him. She knew that the feeling of the moment was in the presence of the Wynatts, and she was about to spring into the face of encircling arms.

"I think it was very generous of you to give me such a present," persisted Estelle.

"My grandfather didn't," Shelby held her head high, and her tone was not pleasant.

"What mystery?" Estelle's look sharpened. "It's almost too good getting married, having a daughter."

The tension was relieved by a daughter, and she was about to burn Johnnie came breezing out on an enthusiastic wing-wagoning dog. But the surprise was Wynatt's, the rebellion in Shelby's, and the look on Estelle's.

"Hello, Gertrude, and Estelle! Hello, Wyn!" cheerfully enough, but Brianne, who was the only one who knew she wouldn't give him her lips—his kiss landed under her ear.

"What's that?" she asked, before the boys. "My scenerio?"

"I'm making the best of it," "Can't she get away with a manœuvre course?"

"She's a good girl," said Estelle, and she knew who was.

"I'm not," said Estelle, with her wonderful horse, said Estelle, with an unpleasant laugh. "But Shelby's horse is about as good as deeply."

Johnnie's blue eyes took to him, and she was about to understand every meaning word of his.

"I'm not," said Estelle, and she knew who was.

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"Honey, I'm sorry I took the horse."

"You'd do nothing of the kind, I'm not going to let you take the horse."

"What's that? The horse?"

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Shelby came out of her dream to realize that by look or cross, Gene Fairchild had induced a great many people to come to his party

price, and raised it ridiculously. "Twenty-five thousand dollars," she said.

Gene eyed her keenly. Did he understand her humane motive in putting on the prohibitive rent?

"That's all right," he said quietly. "I'll have to ask Uncle Emile. She was sorry for Gene, yet elated at the brokerage prospect. She found a telephone, got Southampton, traced Mr. Emile Wyatt to the golf club.

She waited until that evening, afraid to tell, hoping to tell the good news. Uncle Emile had come home, showed the lease, and the brokerage was hers. It had been a good stroke of business, swiftly delivered; that's the way money-making should be, she thought. She wanted to be proud of herself, to try the check in Johnnie's hands, and tell him that they could keep on going now so awful, really. But when she heard a door bang and Johnnie's footstep in the hall, her heart sank. She, who had boasted that she wasn't afraid of any man, unreasonably feared the only man she could ever love.

But he was whispering merrily, affluently. That was a good omen, and she forgot her misgivings in the future desire that meetings always brought her. Now she was with him, sunk in his arms. John-

nie kissed her, more hastily than usual, and was full of talk about his day in town. He'd been cooking his heels outside the offices of Ventrone and Hill. Then they had seen him. Ventrone and Hill, a perfect team. Ventrone talks like a Miami prospect, but Hill dishes the frost. "Was Johnnie's version," Ventrone had said that the mortgage on the property wouldn't amount to anything. If they liked the proposition, Hill said that that encumbered property always meant trouble.

Johnnie was rattling on so excited over his game of hide-and-seek, that Shelby had to lead him to the dining room and stop his mouth with fried eggs and tea before she could begin the subject of Eugene Fairchild. But Johnnie's mouth was only partly stopped.

He hinted at the Wendell people in Huntington, he went on chattering an eggy bread-crust. That seemed to wake up Hill. He even forgot his little speech about encumbered property.

"Our property's not so encumbered as it was this morning," he announced quite bravely.

"No? Been raising the mortgage, chuck?"

"Well, I've rented Uncle Emile's house."

"You don't mean it! Then, after swallowing another crust, it was

plain to see that his mind had reverted to Ventrone and Hill.

"I told you," he pronounced, "I got twenty-five thousand dollars for the party, and the check's in our hands."

"I'll tell the world," he encouraged, fondled her shoulder, reached for a cigarette. "Who was the owner?"

"Gene Fairchild."

She touched a match to the powder stick stiffly, waiting for destruction. A sudden wisp of the fire slowly ate its way up the fuse and the match-making process went against the coming shock.

But there was no shock. Only a fuse.

"Well," said Johnnie, "I wonder what that nut wants to come out here for?"

"He says he likes country life," said Shelby, rather giddy with the strain.

"You certainly got a fancy price out of him."

"I'll mislead the rent, still afraid of the impending bid, 'I didn't think he'd get along very well here, so I tried to discourage him.'"

"Smart kid," Johnnie was only half-sarcastic; he had begun prying on an envelope. Then vaguely he lifted his eyes and said, "Don't you think it would be a good idea for us not to see much of him."

"I don't think we'll need to,"

agreed. So Johnnie was thinking his own thoughts, after all.

IN JUNE they were giving Saturday night dinner-dances at the Country Club; Shelby went twice with Johnnie. She still wore the green gown of San Hernandez days, and it must have remained effective, for she was popular with the men, especially the Quindaro college set. Some of the younger women, too, she enjoyed; they were also Outsiders—people who had come to Wyatville less than twenty years ago.

Besides the dancing, which she loved, these occasions were dramatic because they gave her an insight into the social progress of Eugene Westcott Fairchild. Of no doubt he had gained a membership by the former, he had pronounced: "If you have the money you can buy a ticket anywhere." He always came to the club dances, was rather stiffly polite, never attempted to repeat the rowdy language of one San Hernandez night.

He had given a new polo field to Wyatville. The old conservatives, huddling in corners, waiting for bridge to begin, spoke softly as of an earthquake or a fire. The Committee, chattering, have taken his money. But four Wyatts had come to the dance.

Despite her daily preoccupation in love and work and the making of a home, Shelby had had time to consider herself and Gene as somewhat dimmed ponds, brought to Wyatville on approval.

She had tried to keep her mind on her work, but she could not. Fairchild had had time to consider herself and Gene as somewhat dimmed ponds, brought to Wyatville on approval. She had tried to keep her mind on her work, but she could not. Fairchild had had time to consider herself and Gene as somewhat dimmed ponds, brought to Wyatville on approval.

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"No, not Wyatville." "Do you know the County of Sherba has taken a house nine miles down the River?"

"Nicko." A little restrained, "Yes, I've heard. A worried alien—'Why did she move from Southampton, do you suppose?'"

"I guess she's not the Wyatts, I guess. Remember how she grabbed at Johnnie out on the Coast? She's one of the Wyatts, isn't she? I'm getting that way too." With a slight, self-critical laugh, "But isn't Nicko the little loose-lip?"

"She's been telling people my father was a horse trader." Shelby was resentful again.

"Whoopi!" His fellow was so powerful that she was leaning away toward the racetrack, superstitiously uneasy that Johnnie would be there and meet her riding the ship. She had turned her horse again toward the racetrack, superstitiously uneasy that Johnnie would be there and meet her riding the ship.

"What's she so funny?" "She's told the world that I cheat on her out of Briary and give him to you."

"No! Shelby drew in, made as if to dismount. "I can't have Briary," she said. "I can't have Briary," she said. "I can't have Briary," she said. "I can't have Briary," she said.

"He's a decent mind. But Gene, won't you take Briary to me, I love him, but I can't."

Gene became suddenly tense. "You're wedding me, aren't you? I've always wanted you to have him. I'll do something about it. I'll please, Shelby. You don't care what Wyatville says, do you?"

"You must care, you wouldn't be doing so much for them." "He made no reply to this, at first, and they rode on in silence. "Shelby," he said, "I'm going to buy a new horse. I mean for me. The kind that'll make 'em sit up and rub the fur out of their eyes. It won't be any of your dinky lap-scooped dancin' like the girls at their so-called country club. I'm going to let 'em know I'm here."

"Think you could help me out, Shelby?" he was asking. "Help steer in some of these penguins."

She was thinking of what Johnnie would say—and Nicko nine miles down the pile, checking out scandal, did she know what she was doing. Gene, I'm not so popular round here."

"I'll make you popular."

"Thank you, kind sir." Her laugh was more nervous still. "Now and you can't ask, asking people to your grand hall?"

"Oh, I've met practically everybody at the country club. I'll ask the ones I don't know. I'll post a notice on the bulletin board."

"That's original," she smiled. "I am original," he acknowledged, and asked sharply, "Thank anybody?"

"Some of 'em will."

"They've got a thousand dollars against our," declared Gene, "that the whole mob will be there, from the grandstand to the grandstand."

"Let's make it even money," said Shelby, showing her dimples.

"How much?"

"Bet you a nickel."

"That's all," said Gene Fairchild solemnly.

"How you set a date?"

"The fifteen."

"Well, if we can possibly make it."

But he was already trotting away, offending, perhaps, and if he had asked her to make a date, he would, just as well.

Shelby and Johnnie went to his party, and under circumstances as happily unforeseen as though a party grand hall had been drawn there.

That night she came out as far as to get a green dress on the bed and set her silver supper on the table. She was waiting for the party she craved. Then, while she was wondering how to win him back, she heard a door bang and a kid's feet almost tumbled downstairs and into his arms.

"It was no bad news, she saw, as Johnnie declared Gene was coming from his eyes, his nose, his ears."

"Ventrone and Hill!" He executed fancy steps. "Ventrone and Hill!"

"Taken us up, that's all! Formed a pool. We've been forming it all day. Johnnie, I've been forming it all day. You think of me as President of the country club, don't you?"

"With thumbs under his suspenders, he strutted."

"Oh, just perfectly actually. President with a bonus. And Ventrone and Hill!"

going to architect the whole chess."

"Johnnie!"

A great deal of kissing, hugging, dancing around. They were both laughing with tears in their eyes. "Do you know, chuck," he confessed, "there was a time not so long ago when I was sort of yellow. I was a grocer, I know it, but I don't think that the old race-track was going to bust right in our faces. Didn't you, sometimes?"

"I didn't let myself think," she said. "And see what it's brought us to, not thinking!"

"Lair!" he accused. "You're all ways thinking. Oh, say! He had looked over at the bed, seen the green dress. Where do we go from here? Big dance or something? All night whoopee? Night club, dance around, stay up till the cock crow home?"

"Yes, Johnnie. Dance our feet off."

"Why not? Let's get in the fliv."

This is the night Gene Fairchild's going has party. For an instant she lost her desire to go, but Johnnie's reply was not reassuring.

"We've got, aren't we?"

"Why, yes, Johnnie, you want to."

"I'd dance on a griddle tonight, just to keep it hot. When do we start?"

"About 10 o'clock."

"Gerrand!"

WHITE lamps on the high stone gateway guided them in as the young

Wyatts came on the wings of fortune, to Eugene Fairchild's dance.

The men were pushing slowly toward Fairchild's bar front door, and Shirley came out of her dream to realize that big dance or something. Gene Fairchild had induced a great many people to come to his party.

The air, pungent with shining hospitality from the ground floor to its peaked gables. Uniformed men guided the traffic, one of them took charge of Johnnie's car. There were a great many liveried servants in the hall, indicating the ladies' cloak room and the men's.

"Go on," Shirley heard Johnnie say this, and nothing more, as they separated.

Gene, indeed. Among the ladies in the dressing-room upstairs she seated half a dozen Wyatts. Aunt Bettina, magnificent and dowdy in her well-known real lace, and Edith, the fashionable lady she had learned was Estelle's sister, Mrs. Paxton Dornan.

Somehow the effect of shipwrecked mariners, clinging together on a raft, being very pleasant to impending sharks.

However, they were there. Not only that when Shelby joined her husband in the hall she found Edith engaged in conversation with Grandpa Wyatt, a handsome, withered old thing, leaning on a mahogany stick. Wyatt Farnes, distinguished by his extraordinarily high collar and supercilious perfect face, never lost reviewing the pageantry. The Wyatts were there in full force, being as seeing money.

"Hen," said Grandpa Wyatt, cracking dry lips. "We never saw anything like this."

"Maybe we never will again," chuckled Grandpa Wyatt.

"Hen," said Grandpa Wyatt, and allowed the dutiful Estelle to lead him and toward distant music.

"The wide lawn was enchanting with fairy lights and fanciful flames. At the center of the lawn, under the trees, people sat in groups, drinking Gene's champagne. Laid-out men were hurrying to serve them.

They stood near the entrance, shaking hands, the perfect host, neither pompous nor subservient. When they came up, Gene was frankly delighted. "Well, well! God you look swell!" Then he grinned, said a flash, and resumed his poker face.

"You're giving the hall of the century," she said.

"I don't seem to be coming along all right," he admitted. "And I hope you'll let me dance with you pretty soon."

Shelby and her fortunate husband danced together rapturously, keeping to the center of the floor, so that the stag-line wouldn't cut in. They were level-headed, and Johnnie, in long, sweet waves of motion, it was intoxicating to have Gene's hand on her waist.

"Isn't this the nicest thing in the world, and isn't it that the best of us have been so badly broke into her dream with a rough exclamation.

"Look over your shoulder and see it!"

She saw it. Gene Fairchild in a stately four-foot with Aunt Bettina.

"He's passed by the Board of Censors. The royal seal, the rubber stamp, the baggage tag are on him. He's admitted. Can you believe it?"

Yet, said Shelby emphatically, just then a college boy came.

He was a little older than Shelby, perhaps, but his style of love-making had a caliph, undeveloped round. Circling the room, enjoying his steps, she looked over and counted the items in Gene's self-made welcome to Wyatts.

Wyatt Farnes was awning a figure in ivory satin very close to her. Shelby almost touched the woman's elbow gloves; the magnificent strains of music, a romantic fervor in the pitch of her head—then she looked up. Her sharp-edged eyes met Shelby's squarely without asking for recognition or receiving it.

The music had stopped now, the dancers two by two were strolling out toward the ladies on the lawn. Then the well-remembered woman came by on Wyatt Farnes's arm.

"Hello, Nicky," said Shelby, touching her long white gloves.

"Hello, Nicky," said Shelby, touched with his drop of condescension. She held out her hand, but Johnnie's arm remained rigidly at her side. Wyatt Farnes was a picture, trying to be a man of the world in an embarrassing situation.

"What have you been saying?" asked Shelby, "about my father's being a horse-trainer?"

Nicky's small, pretty features were troubled only by a smile. "My dear child," she smiled, "who could you have been listening to?"

"And what have you been saying about Mr. Fairchild's stealing Brisky from you, so that he could give him to me?"

"What a perfectly absurd story!" Still unmoved, the old, gay Nicky. Shelby turned to Wyatt Farnes, whose plump cheeks were deepening from baby pink to imperial purple.

Mr. Farnes, said Nicky, "Mrs. Nicholson asked me to keep that horse for her. Then, when she heard the contrary, she told me, 'Honesty, she left Brisky on my hands.'"

"You have the story a little mixed. In fact," said Nicky, and she didn't lose her good humor.

"No, I haven't. I was there and you weren't."

"And the horse is yours now. How fortunate!"

Mr. Fairchild bought him and sent him to me and Johnnie as a wedding present. I suppose you allow that Johnnie's a good girl."

"Oh, art you?" As though she had never dreamed of such a thing. "I want you to stop telling her about me," she said quickly.

"Jazz?" Mrs. Nicholson's plucked eyebrows reached an acute arch.

"That's just what I mean. I'm not in your employ any more. I'm a married woman and I have a home."

"Isn't the delicious child!" Nicky appealed with laughter to Wyatt Farnes and to Gene, who they stroked away toward the lawn.

When Gene Fairchild came up and asked, "May I?" Shelby's mind was still engaged in the matter of the horse by the door. Because Gene had become her friend and ally in her fabrication, Shelby had many things to say to him as they danced. But her tongue was cut and her tongue was cut and her tongue was cut.

Stun, skillfully Gene was guided. That just what I mean. I'm not in your employ any more. I'm a married woman and I have a home."

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He flipped into a chair, turning a wretched face to Shelby. "Give me some more coffee." When he saw her, he turned away, drank it down, sneezing hot.

hollow tone, addressing Mr. Hill over the wire. "But, Mr. Hill, I don't understand it that way yesterday."

"Yes, but the bank is mine, and mine is ours."

"What? * * * Mr. Ventnor and I went into all that very carefully."

"No, it won't inconvenience me at all."

"Then the crazy skeleton of a voice, smoothing through space, Mr. Hill had a great deal to say. What was it that made poor Johnnie so pale?"

An emphatic came to the pit of Shelby's stomach.

"That's only a detail, Mr. Hill," concluded Johnnie, with false brightness. "Then he hurried and turned a wretched face to Shelby."

"He slipped into a chair. 'Give me some more coffee. When he saw her, he turned away, drank it down, sneezing hot."

"I'll say it's just a matter of form," he broke out bitterly. "I knew hell gum."

"Now he says it can't take over the property unless it's title free. Just a matter of form. But!"

"He gave me last Tuesday to lift that mortgage. Don't you see me raising ten thousand dollars in three days?"

"—She sat gazing at the appalling sum. 'Johnnie, can't people build a town with a mortgage on it?'

"Ventnor and Hill can't. It seems. Just a matter of form! But! He said, practically, that the deny off unless I buy my share of the chips."

"She came over, stroked his puffed head, told him it was all right."

"But it isn't all right," he insisted savagely. "What have we got to do with it? We agreed to keep it for a crisis."

"Well, we're in a fix. We'll begin, for cigars, distracted, fishing for them on the floor. 'The bond's

"I reckon not, Gene."

"We've just had a lucky break. We're prosperous now. A big syndicate has taken over Johnnie's tract. They're going to build a village there. And they've made Johnnie president."

"That's fine," said Gene heartily. "Fine."

She even thanked him for his offer, and he accepted her thanks gravely. She had a feeling of escape by a hand's breadth. At his gesture, she turned away, but she thoroughly realized what his generous gesture was possibly but.

But Gene Fairchild, who boasted that he could buy his way in anywhere, had a different opinion.

When the music stopped, and Gene thanking her courteously for the dance, turned her over to Dan McCull, who was thinking, "What a lucky, lucky day for me! I don't mind, and that offer yesterday."

"What would I have said?"

"RIGHT O' clock breakfast might have been dull for them."

He didn't come home from the dance till after three. But they had awakened early in a blaze of excitement; their adventure was under way. This was the day of days. Now they were at breakfast, for Johnnie must catch the nine-eleven to make connections with the Albany train. This would give her two hours in New York to meet the lawyers and sign up.

"The telephone rang. Shelby, a little more than the day's misadventures, was the first to answer it. "Hello, Ventnor and Hill speaking. And a crackly voice, the kind that Mr. Hill would have."

"Could I speak to Mr. Wyatt?"

"Mr. Hill wants to talk to you."

"Well, you're in luck. If you begin to sink lower and lower it sink, sympathetic to Johnnie's

"Johnnie and I have plenty." It sounded lame.

"Put for Wyattville. Money's my business, you know."

"Put you in the way of something."

"With a slight distance for him."

"I wouldn't bother you with that, but my eye on the money."

"I'm bound to jump early in the week. Let me buy you a thousand shares."

"She made a noise, and she went on smoothly."

"You're in luck. If you lose, forget it. Is that a deal, Shelby?"

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